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ABSTRACT

The Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education has as its main objective to improve postsecondary educational opportunities by providing assistance to educational institutions and agencies for a broad range of reforms and innovations. Grants and contracts may be awarded by the Fund for one of 8 purposes: (1) encouraging the reform, innovation, and improvement of postsecondary education, and providing equal educational opportunity for all; (2) the creation of institutions and programs involving new paths to career and professional training and new combinations of academic and experimental learning; (3) the establishment of institutions and programs based on the technology of communications; (4) the carrying out in postsecondary educational institutions of changes in internal structure and operations designed to clarify institutional priorities and purposes; (5) the design and introduction of cost-effective methods of instruction and operation; (6) the introduction of institutional reforms designed to expand individual opportunities for entering and reentering institutions and pursuing programs of study tailored to individual trends; (7) the introduction of reforms in graduate education, in the structure of academic professions, and in the recruitment and retention of faculties; and (8) the creation of new institutions and programs for examining and awarding credentials to individuals. (HS)

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION
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PROGRAM INFORMATION

AND APPLICATION PROCEDURES

FUND FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Education Amendments Act of 1972 authorizes the Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare to improve postsecondary educational opportunities by providing assistance to educational institutions and agencies for a broad range of reforms and innovations.*

To implement this authority, the Secretary has established the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, a separate organizational unit within the Department of H.E.W., under the general supervision of the Assistant Secretary for Education. The Fund is administered by a Director and a small professional staff. The Director is responsive to a fifteen-member, Secretarially-appointed Board which is authorized to recommend policy priorities for the Fund, and to review grants and contracts of a specified kind and amount.

The Fund is a governmental, grant-making organization with four distinguishing characteristics:

-- It is comprehensive in scope, covering the entire range of postsecondary education.

-- It is responsive, seeking to yield to external initiative the task of conceiving and developing proposals to be funded.

-- It is action-oriented. While the Fund will entertain proposals for policy-oriented studies and feasibility studies directly related to reform and innovation, it will not fund proposals for basic research.

-- It is risk-taking. The Fund will entertain proposals for new and unproven ideas as well as proven ones.

*The specific authority is contained in Title III, Section 404 of the General Education Provisions Act, as amended by the Education Amendments of 1972.

II. GENERAL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The basic purpose of the Fund is to help fulfill our national commitment to extend postsecondary educational opportunities. While other Federal programs have extended opportunities for access to postsecondary education, the role of the Fund is to improve the effectiveness and quality of postsecondary education itself.

In fulfilling this purpose, the Fund will pursue two objectives, diversity and cost-effectiveness. These will be pursued primarily through the encouragement of structural, learner-centered improvements throughout postsecondary education.

--- Diversity. The population seeking improved postsecondary educational opportunities is rapidly changing. It is increasingly larger, now including over half of all high school graduates as well as many individuals beyond "college age". It is increasingly different, as a result of the multiple cultural and technological changes at work in our society. It is increasingly new in that it includes more individuals from socio-economic groups and circumstances previously underrepresented in postsecondary education.

To meet the needs of this population, the Fund seeks to expand the total diversity of educational services. This does not mean that the Fund encourages each center of learning to become more diverse---indeed, to increase their effectiveness, some centers of learning might well become less diverse. It does

mean that the Fund seeks to encourage effective educational options which are not generally available.

--- Cost-effectiveness. Increased public expenditures for post-secondary education have generated new demands for accountability and more effective use of resources. Thus, the Fund is interested in encouraging more value for the same dollar, or the same value for fewer dollars. In addition, since educational changes will increasingly necessitate a reallocation of existing resources rather than an expansion of new resources, the Fund will be inclined to financing techniques which encourage such reallocations.

--- Structural change. In order to have maximum impact with limited resources, the Fund is particularly interested in improvements which have far-reaching effects. This does not mean that every improvement must have wide applicability, nor that only replicable innovations will be funded. It does mean, however, that the Fund encourages solutions to problems of a general and structural kind, rather than problems which are temporary or unique.

--- Learner-centered change. The basic purpose of the Fund is to improve educational opportunities for learners. This does not mean that only those improvements which will directly benefit learners will receive support--many changes designed to improve institutions and agencies which provide instruction or other educational services may have a substantial though indirect

impact on learners. It does mean that the Fund will want to know what the probable or eventual impact of each improvement will be on the learning population to be served.

III. PROGRAM AREAS

The authorizing legislation for the Fund identifies eight purposes for which grants and contracts may be awarded. These are:

"(1) encouraging the reform, innovation, and improvement of postsecondary education, and providing equal educational opportunity for all;

"(2) the creation of institutions and programs involving new paths to career and professional training, and new combinations of academic and experiential learning;

"(3) the establishment of institutions and programs based on the technology of communications;

"(4) the carrying out in postsecondary educational institutions of changes in internal structure and operations designed to clarify institutional priorities and purposes;

"(5) the design and introduction of cost-effective methods of instruction and operation;

"(6) the introduction of institutional reforms designed to expand individual opportunities for entering and reentering institutions and pursuing programs of study tailored to individual needs;

"(7) the introduction of reforms in graduate education, in the structure of academic professions, and in the recruitment and retention of faculties; and

"(8) the creation of new institutions and programs for examining and awarding credentials to individuals, and the introduction of reforms in current institutional practices related thereto.

In recognition of the need for further guidance to applicants, the Board and Director have identified five broad areas within which the Fund will be especially interested in receiving proposals. These areas are not mutually exclusive, but each defines a set of problems and directions which might be taken to improve postsecondary educational opportunities. At the same time, it should be understood that the Fund welcomes bold and imaginative proposals, related to the reform,

innovation, and improvement of postsecondary education, which fit no preconceived categories of grant-making activity.

A. New Approaches to Teaching and Learning

New approaches to teaching and learning are needed to implement broader conceptions of the purpose of education. New purposes and new approaches, in turn, require new techniques of assessment and evaluation.

Purposes

The Fund encourages the consideration of the following kinds of needs:

-- Education for social responsibility. Various characteristics of modern society--rapid technological change which outpaces social understanding, large-scale organization and centralized decision-making, the multiplication of social services, the increasing interdependence of people and interconnections among social problems--have generated new requirements for civic literacy and social leadership. Thus the Fund encourages imaginative proposals designed to prepare individuals and groups for effective participation and problem-solving in modern society.

-- Education for a productive life through career and professional preparation. New families of skills are needed to keep pace with emerging occupations and professions. Jobs are shifting from the production of goods to the service-oriented occupations, and

hence skills needed in the future will increasingly include the ability to work effectively with others. Since most individuals embarking upon a career will seek retraining in order to keep pace with new knowledge and technological change, education for a productive life must become a continuous process, with opportunities for acquiring additional education at various stages of development.

-- The enhancement of personal satisfaction through education. With the increase of leisure time, the role of education for personal development will become more important. Appreciation of aesthetic and cultural expressions, sensitivity toward others and self-understanding together constitute a growing area for the future of postsecondary education. In addition, recent developments in areas of affective learning suggest a new field of relevant involvement for postsecondary education. Rising rates of drug use, crime, and divorce suggest special attention ought to be paid to the affective as well as the cognitive development of the population.

New Ways of Teaching and Learning

While experimentation is increasing, much of postsecondary education has institutionalized but a single mode of learning. Many teachers impart abstract knowledge, divorced from feeling and action, through classroom lectures and discussions. Learners assume relatively passive roles. The pace, intensity, and focus of learning is standardized by the organization

of nearly all formal instruction into credit hours and courses offered in sequences of quarters or semesters during an academic year.

This mode, excellent for some individuals, cannot accommodate the variety of learning abilities and styles of learners now seeking post-secondary education. Meaningful alternatives of demonstrated effectiveness exist. Learning problems can be concrete. Teachers can serve as counselors, mentors, co-learners, project directors, and in many other roles. Patterns of organizing learning utilized by experimental schools, industry, governmental and other institutions have demonstrated the success of intensive, concentrated, task-oriented, and other learning forms.

Given the diversity of the postsecondary population of the 1970's, the desirability of expanded purposes for education, and the need for making all kinds of learning more meaningful to learners, the Fund encourages experimentation of the following kind:

-- The integration of learning experiences. Ways in which learning experiences may be integrated include (a) integration across courses and disciplines; (b) integration of learning resources; and (c) integration of formal learning with other life experiences.

The Fund encourages proposals for imaginative and bold efforts to achieve integration in all these ways. Integration across courses and disciplines might include efforts to develop foci other than academic disciplines for teaching and professional involvement. Integration of resources might involve the use

of distinguished practitioners, or carrying out education in cooperation with the industrial or cultural resources of an area. It might also involve efforts to bring together co-learners of widely differing ages or walks of life into a new learning community. Integration of formal learning with other life experiences might involve a genuine integration of schooling with work or leisure in which education is carried out within altogether new settings, and the total experience is expressed through a new curriculum.

-- The individualization of educational services. Approaches which begin with the learner's present capabilities and circumstances and attempt to move him toward his future goals involve the individualization of educational services. Thus the Fund encourages efforts which begin with a systematic diagnosis of the learner's abilities and interests, and then utilize imaginative new means--including, but not limited to, the new technologies--to foster individual development.

-- Improved techniques. New modes of teaching and learning need not involve dramatic departures from the traditional educational framework or from accepted educational goals in order to substantially improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Techniques or practices operating within existing structures and/or institutions which promise an enhancement of cognitive skills or a more efficient use of time and other resources may

contribute significantly to the potency of teaching and learning. The Fund encourages educators to think imaginatively about new techniques appropriate for postsecondary education.

New Methods of Assessment and Evaluation

If we are to develop new approaches to teaching and learning appropriate to broader educational purposes, then simultaneous attention must be given to expanding the range of measures of educational impact available. The Fund encourages the development of new tools and new methods for assessing the outcomes of postsecondary education, recognizing that ultimately the improvement of teaching and learning depends upon valid and reliable information about the impact of education upon learners.

B. Implementing Equal Educational Opportunities

For over a decade, the provision of equal educational opportunity has been a major national priority in postsecondary education. While great inequities persist, progress has been made in broadening access to postsecondary education to groups previously excluded.

Yet exposure alone--particularly exposure to simply the most available forms of postsecondary education--does not, we have learned, constitute equality of opportunity for significant educational experiences. For education to be both available and meaningful, changes are required not only in academic programs and practices but peer environments, supporting services, possibilities for mobility among institutions, and many other things, including fundamental institutionalized assumptions about the "who",

"when", "where", and "how" of postsecondary education. Such changes can significantly improve the quality of postsecondary education for everyone. The Fund thus encourages proposals which go beyond access in an effort to tailor postsecondary education to fit the needs, circumstances, aspirations, interest, and abilities of new clientele.

The New Clientele

The new clientele for postsecondary education includes all those who have been underrepresented in the past. These distinctive though overlapping groups consist of:

-- Young people who rank in the lower half of the high school population. Among the young, a new group who will be seeking postsecondary opportunities in the 1970's will be those who share the common characteristic of having relatively poor records of academic achievement in high school. The Fund encourages new approaches which concentrate on identifying and developing fully the talents and interests which this new clientele brings to postsecondary education.

-- Adults and part-time learners. Adults and part-time learners constitute a growing market for traditional and nontraditional postsecondary education. They present a challenge to the time and place requirements of traditional higher education. Examples of the needs of this new clientele are: new delivery systems to take education into homes, workplaces, and other institutions such as prisons and hospitals; new schemes of credit and evaluation

that measure education in terms of what is learned rather than how or where it is learned; new approaches to counseling and information services; attention to realistic concepts of life-long learning.

-- Minorities. In addition to being represented in the above groups, minorities bring a special set of motivations, interests in, and needs for postsecondary education which have not been taken into account in the initial efforts to provide equality of opportunity.

-- Women. Changing opportunities in many fields of endeavor and remarkable changes in the role of women in American society require new kinds of postsecondary education responsive to the aspirations and changing patterns of women's lives. Thus women constitute a fourth group of new clientele.

Approaches

Attempts to respond to the needs of new clientele can be distinguished in terms of whether or not they seek to achieve access, remediation, or the restructuring of education itself. Efforts to acheive access to existing institutions include such things as open admissions, financial aid, and special recuritment programs. Efforts to achieve remediation include such things as counseling and tutorial programs which seek to bring students to a level at which they can participate in traditional kinds of postsecondary education. While the Fund recognizes the need for continuing efforts to achieve both access and remediation, other Federal programs address these objectives. The Fund encourages bold and imaginative efforts to restructure

the educational experience itself along lines which will enhance its significance to the new clientele.

C. Revitalizing Institutional Missions

For any institution to be vital, self-renewing, and effective, it must have a sense of mission--it must know what it is, and where it is going. The more focused and intensely held, the more this sense of mission will pervade all aspects of the institution, giving internal coherence to policy and programmatic choices.

In recent decades, complex forces have moved great numbers of postsecondary educational institutions far from this idealized model. The growth in institutional size and the pace of this growth, the increasing use of educational institutions as administrative bases for a variety of social activities, the shift in decision-making over crucial issues such as admissions and program selection to external authorities, the gravitational pull of the university as a status model for other institutions and the increase of university-trained faculties in these institutions--these and other processes have all eroded the distinctive missions among educational institutions.

The Fund seeks to foster a diverse postsecondary education system comprised of vital, distinctive institutions seeking excellence at different educational tasks. The Fund therefore encourages proposals

designed to revitalize institutional missions. Such proposals might, for example, involve:

-- The implementation of new arrangements or activities designed to channel institutional energies more effectively toward an institution's mission.

New arrangements might include a decentralization of governance and decision-making from central to local units which would encourage the development of definable educational communities. They might include the introduction of incentive systems in support of institutional missions. They might include mergers and other arrangements for sharing resources so that an institution can better achieve its mission.

-- The phasing-out of programs or activities no longer central to an institution's mission.

The difficult task of ending old commitments is often a necessary step before energies can be effectively channeled and focused on central institutional purposes. The Fund encourages proposals seeking support for the termination of these extraneous undertakings.

In all cases, to be reviewed favorably by the Fund, proposals for revitalizing institutional missions should demonstrate (1) the mission selected serves an important social objective; (2) the activities to be supported are central to a strengthening of an institutional mission; (3) the activities will have a long-term effect on the institution; and (4) that constituencies relevant to the implementation of the plan are involved in and support the project.

D. New Educational Missions

To keep pace with rapid social change, new educational missions are needed in addition to revitalizing the old. At times, new missions can be accomplished through the redirection of existing organizations. At times, new missions require bringing resources into play which exist but have not been fully utilized as educational institutions. At times, new missions require totally fresh organizational concepts and new staffs dedicated to carrying out a distinctive new venture. Frequently, a single individual in an entrepeneurial role provides the leadership around which new missions are begun. The Fund encourages new educational missions in all these ways.

New educational missions can be based on new and different concepts of learning and of human nature, of the kind of communities to be served, or of the ways in which physical or human resources can be utilized in the educational process. The following illustrations are by no means exhaustive, or necessarily of the highest priority, but indicate the range of possibilities which the Fund will entertain:

-- missions based on new concepts of learning communities--such as cross-generational communities--and new ways of relating these communities to the educational purposes being sought

-- missions which capitalize on the significance of community life and traditions, so that postsecondary education can strengthen distinctive communities, and community values and settings can reinforce the purposes of the educational process

-- missions which capitalize on the availability of new resources--be these talented individuals, industrial or cultural facilities, community groups and organizations, or whatever--and bring these resources into active play in the provision of postsecondary education

-- missions which provide certain educational functions--such as counseling, examining, credentialing--in new ways which open up new possibilities for individuals and new settings within which learning can occur

-- missions based on new concepts of <u>what</u> can be learned <u>when</u>, such as missions to provide professional education to young people entering postsecondary education, or liberal education well along in their careers

1. Encouraging an Open System

The opportunities for initiative and choice which are open to those who seek and those who provide postsecondary education are increasingly affected by structures and processes external to postsecondary institutions. The Fund therefore welcomes improvements in those areas and activities which significantly affect the options open to those who engage in postsecondary education. These areas include, but are not limited to, the following:

-- Improvements in the information about postsecondary education which is available to learners, to educational institutions and agencies, and to policy-makers, and improvements in the ways in which this information is communicated.

-- Improvements in the standards, practices, and structures for assessing and evaluating the performance of individuals and institutions engaged in postsecondary education, and improvements in the utilization of these assessments and evaluations by other groups. Such improvements include, for example, innovations and reforms in the accreditation of institutions, in the methods of examining and certifying individuals, and in the procedures by which States and other groups utilize accreditation and certification as evidence of the capabilities and performance of individuals and institutions.

-- Improvements in the forms and techniques of providing financial support to postsecondary education, particularly forms and techniques which affect the incentives and relationships of those engaged in the educational process.

IV. PROCEDURES

Eligibility

The Fund will provide grants to and contracts with institutions of postsecondary education or combinations of such institutions and other educational agencies and organizations concerned with the improvement of postsecondary education. The Fund encourages the submission of proposals from new as well as existing structures.

Kinds of Support

Awards will be made through the instrumentality of grants or contracts, depending on the nature of the project and its objectives, except that all for-profit institutions may receive assistance only in the form of contracts.

In order to maximize the impact of the Fund's scarce resources, and to ensure the active commitment of institutions and agencies to projects proposed, the Fund may employ various financial techniques, such as:

- Cooperative funding. The Fund is interested in cooperating with other funding agents where this will lead to viable combinations of support.
- Cost sharing. The Fund may ask that sponsoring institutions provide some portion of total project costs.
- Diminishing awards. Funding extending over more than one year may take the form of higher initial support, with decreasing proportions of the total costs borne by the Fund over time.

Submission of Proposals

(1) Title page. Each proposal should be covered by a title page which contains the following information:

(a) Name and address of contracting institution or agency.

(b) Name and signature of authorizing officer.

(c) Name, address, and phone number of project director.

(d) Dates of project duration (including evaluation time).

(e) Amount requested: total project costs and first-year.

(f) Proposal title.

(g) A brief, one-paragraph description of the project, stating in specific concise terms what the project proposes to do and how.

(2) Proposal information. While there is no standard format for proposals, each should be brief, precise and specific. One orignial plus ten(10) copies of each proposal should be submitted. The following four kinds of information should be provided.

(a) Problem diagnosis. The Fund is interested in what the problem is that the proposal seeks to address. This diagnosis should include, if appropriate, (1) a description of the nature of the problem and related conditions, (2) supporting empirical evidence, and (3) a description of past attempts to deal with this problem and an assessment of these attempts.

(b) Description of the proposed project. This should include (1) the short-term and long-term objectives, (2) the agent(s) who will implement the objectives, (3) the steps to be taken in implementing the project and the schedule for completion.

(c) Significance of the proposed project. This should include (1) a very brief statement as to how the project relates to the priorities established by the Fund and/or contributes to the improvement of postsecondary education; and (2) if the project is continuing, expected sources of financial support after the period of Fund support has elapsed.

(d) Budget. On a separate sheet, a complete standard budget should be prepared, detailing expenditures for salary, travel, etc. Indirect costs may be assessed only if the rate has been previously approved by the Office of Grants Administration Policy of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

(e) Evaluation plan. A carefully thought out evaluation plan helps to insure that a proposal is well-conceived and that it contains specific objectives by which it can be judged upon its completion. Evaluation plans should include (1) the criteria by which the project will be evaluated, (2) the methods and schedule for reporting and evaluation, and (3) the cost of the evaluation component.

(3) Contact with the Fund Staff. While the Fund does not have a formal process for reviewing proposals at the "idea stage", and assumes no obligation for formal comment on such proposals, applicants are encouraged to contact the staff of the Fund for information and guidance pertinent to the development of proposals.

(4) Closing date. The Fund encourages the early submission of proposals. For fiscal year 1973 awards, proposals should be submitted no later than April 15, 1973.

Review Process

(a) The Director and staff of the Fund will review proposals to determine their eligibility for funding, their comparative rating in terms of the priorities of the Fund, and the soundness of project design. Outside readers and consultants will frequently be asked to evaluate the proposals and to undertake site examinations. Final decisions will be made by the Director of the Fund in consultation with the Board.

(b) Section 404(b) of the enabling legislation states, in part, "No grant shall be made or contract entered into under subsection (a) for a project or program with any institution of postsecondary education unless it has been submitted to each appropriate State Commission established under Section 1202 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, and an opportunity afforded

such Commission to submit its comments and recommendation to the Secretary."

The Fund encourages postsecondary institutions to work with their respective State agencies prior to the submission of proposals in order to expedite the review process and ensure proper coordination with the objectives of State policy. The Fund, however, requests that proposals be forwarded directly from applicant institutions. After review by the Fund, designated 1202 State Postsecondary Education Commissions where established, will be notified of those proposals which are potential candidates for funding awards.